

Message Text

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FOR EUR/CE - BRUCE FLATIN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP (KREISKY, BRUNO) AU

SUBJECT: KREISKY VISIT TO US: BACKGROUND PAPER: AUSTRIA'S ROLE
IN CENTRAL EUROPE

REF: VIENNA 8873

1. AUSTRIA FOLLOWS A FOREIGN POLICY OF ACTIVE NEUTRALITY
AND AUSTRIAN LEADERS BELIEVE THEIR COUNTRY'S WELL BEING
IS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY CHANGES IN THE CLIMATE OF
EAST/WEST RELATIONS. AUSTRIA IS UNABLE TO DEFEND ITSELF
MILITARILY AGAINST A MAJOR HOSTILE INVASION AND IS PRECLUDED
FROM ENTERING INTO ANY DEFENSIVE ALLIANCES. IT HAS,
THEREFORE, SOUGHT TO IMPROVE ITS STATUS AS A NEUTRAL BY
ATTEMPTING TO PLAY A USEFUL ROLE AS AN INTERMEDIARY AND
AS A SITE FOR NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING EAST/WEST DETENTE.
AUSTRIANS CITE AS QUALIFICATIONS FOR THIS ROLE AUSTRIA'S
NEUTRAL STATUS, GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION, ITS TRADITIONAL TIES
WITH EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, AND ITS INTERNAL POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC STABILITY.

2. LEADERSHIP GROUPS FROM EASTERN EUROPE GENERALLY
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FIND IT EASIER TO TRAVEL TO AUSTRIA, PARTICULARLY TO

VIENNA, FOR INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS. THESE VISITS EXPOSE SUCH LEADERS TO WESTERN IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS AND CONVERSELY YIELD INFORMATION ABOUT COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

3. AUSTRIA VERY MUCH WELCOMED THE CHOICE OF VIENNA AS A SITE FOR THE SALT I TALKS AND MORE RECENTLY FOR THE MBFR TALKS. IT HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN THE CSCE TALKS, DESIROUS OF ACHIEVING RESULTS WHICH WOULD REALISTICALLY STRENGTHEN ITS SECURITY AND WELL BEING. AUSTRIA HAS ALSO ORGANIZED MEETINGS OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS, PROPOSED REGIONAL COOPERATION AMONG AUSTRIA, ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA IN THE BORDER AREAS, AND HAS CONSULTED WITH OTHER NEUTRALS -- SWITZERLAND, SWEDEN AND FINLAND -- ON A VARIETY OF MATTERS. CHANCELLOR KREISKY CAN BE EXPECTED TO SEEK OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR A GREATER AUSTRIAN ROLE IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA.

4. AUSTRIA'S SELF-ASSIGNED ROLE IN CENTRAL EUROPE GENERALLY ACCORDS WITH US INTERESTS. IN ADDITION, AUSTRIA, PARTICULARLY VIENNA, SERVES AS A MAJOR CENTER FOR THE PROMOTION OF US REGIONAL INTERESTS VIA-A-VIS EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION IN THE FIELDS OF EAST/WEST TRADE, INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND INTELLIGENCE. HUMES

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